Harris unchallenged as Democrats vote for White House nominee

AFP- Kamala Harris will be confirmed as the Democratic US presidential nominee in an electronic vote starting Thursday that replaces the fanfare of in-person balloting that usually kicks off the party's national convention.
Less than two weeks after Joe Biden ended his reelection bid, his 52-year-old vice president is in full control of the party, having emerged as the only Democrat in the running to challenge Republican Donald Trump in November.

Just under 4,000 delegates, the grassroots activists and politicians allocated during the primary process, sent in signatures backing Harris to be on the ballot for the five-day electronic vote.

No other Democrats have stepped forward to challenge her elevation to the top of the ticket, making her confirmation as the first Black and South Asian woman ever to secure a major party's nomination a formality.

She won the support of 99 percent of the delegates who signed petitions, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) said in a statement, while no one else met the qualifying threshold of 300 signatures.

"Our delegates have an important responsibility – and opportunity – in the days ahead to cast their history-making ballots for Vice President Harris, ensuring that she will be on the ballot in every state this November," said DNC chair Jaime Harrison.

"Our party has met this unprecedented moment with a transparent, democratic and orderly process to unite behind a

nominee with a proven record who will lead us in the fight ahead."

As well as the "pledged" delegates there are around 700 so-called "superdelegates" who get to vote because they hold elected office – such as state governors or members of the US Congress – or are party officials.

The roll call launches at 9:00 am (1300 GMT) Thursday and delegates have until 6:00 pm (2000 GMT) on Monday to return their votes via an online platform run by the DNC.

– 'The American story' –

The announcement could come late Monday, as she hits the campaign trail for a swing across seven crucial battleground states with her newly minted running mate, who has not yet been announced.

US media reported that she would kick off the tour in Pennsylvania on Tuesday, although the DNC did not immediately respond to a request for confirmation.

The 2024 nominating system is largely as it was in 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic prevented a large in-person convention, but it is still unusual.

The DNC swapped to a virtual process because of Ohio's deadline – Wednesday next week – for major parties to submit the names of their certified candidates for the November election.

Much remains unclear about the announcement of the results, however.

The DNC has not revealed if the vote will be livestreamed or if a rolling tally will be available to the public, and has not disclosed whether it would make the results public before the end of the voting period if they were available.

The virtual roll-call marks the official beginning of the 2024 convention, although in practice the festivities get going when thousands of the party’s grassroots activists descend on Chicago on August 19.

There will be ceremonial votes for Harris and her running mate in Illinois, in what is expected to be a raucous celebration of her rise from state politics to the top of the ticket.

“Think about this: her dad is of Jamaican descent, her mother’s of South Asian descent and then she went to the great Howard University, worked in California, worked in the United States Senate,” Georgia Senator Raphael Warnock told a raucous, 10,000-strong crowd at Harris’s rally in Atlanta on Tuesday.

“That is the American story. She brings all of those strands together. She sees us because in a real sense she is all of us.”

AFP